

STAN LEE Presents:

HOWARD THE DUCK

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July 1980

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SPECIAL THANKS TO MARK GRUENWALD, WITHOUT WHOSE RESEARCHES INTO THE WORKS
OF TRUMAN CAPOTE, THIS STORY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN!

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Really, some of your letters just quack us up!	

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EDITORIAL

I despise the overuse of superlatives, adjectives, and adverbs. I once ordered my employer not to use those parts of speech for a month (we ran a theatre company, and meaningless hyperbole was the accepted style of communicating information about everything from a new play to the arrival of a new file clerk). So, knowing that I'm a softly spoken, modestly demeanored, un-exaggerating sort of person, you'll realize that I'm really enthusiastic when I say that this issue of HOWARD THE DUCK, this story, DUCKWORLD, is nothing short of SENSATIONAL, MOVING, EXCITING, SUPERLATIVE AND, BY GOLLY, A NEW HOWARD CLASSIC because I really don't like a lot of meaningless hype, and I wouldn't say it if I didn't believe it to be true, right?

lynne

NOTE: We are aware that Howard and Beverly are dressed differently when they land on Duckworld than when they left earth. No "No Prizes" will be awarded, no matter what! So back off, ye hungry masses yearning for glory! Tune in to next issue's editorial for the behind the scenes story.



BACK TO THE EGG!

HOWARD THE DUCK®

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JULY, NO. 6

\$1.25

New Feature:

STREET PEEPLE



07



Penned

THE ORIGIN of HOWARD THE DUCK

ON THE BEGINNING,
THERE WAS THE EGG!

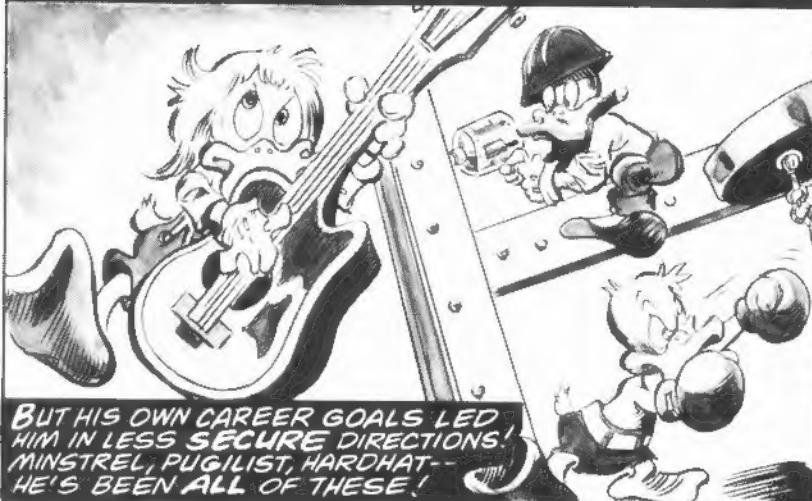
ON OUR EARTH, EVOLUTION HAS CHOSEN THE PRIMATE HOMO SAPIENS -- MAN -- TO ASSUME A TENUES SUPREMACY OVER ALL OTHER SPECIES!



BUT IT WAS NOT SO ON ALL WORLDS!



HIS EARLIEST APTITUDE TESTS REVEALED THAT HOWARD WAS BEST SUITED TO BE A MORTICIAN!



BUT HIS OWN CAREER GOALS LED HIM IN LESS SECURE DIRECTIONS! MINSTREL, PUGILIST, HARDHAT -- HE'S BEEN ALL OF THESE!

BUT MOSTLY, DUE TO HIS TRUCULENT TONGUE, HIS ABRASIVE WIT, AND HIS LOW TOLERANCE FOR OCCUPATIONAL ABASEMENT... HE'S BEEN UNEMPLOYED!



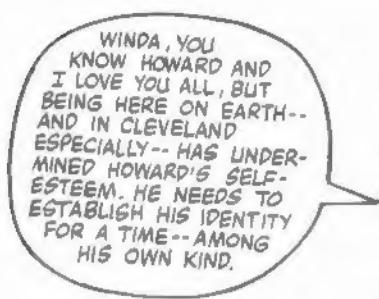
THEN THE COSMIC AXIS SHIFTED, PLUCKING THIS WOEBOGONE WADDLER FROM HIS WORLD--



--AND, AFTER A PERIOD FLOATING IN UNSPACE, DROPPING HIM TO A PAINFUL ONE-POINT LANDING IN-- OF ALL PLACES -- CLEVELAND!

PROLOGUE:

BAY VILLAGE, OHIO -- IT IS IN A HUMBLE RENTED HOUSE IN THIS SMALL SUBURB OF CLEVELAND, USA, THAT AN ALIEN HAS DWELT ON EARTH. A STRANGER FROM A STRANGE WORLD WHO HAS STUDIED OUR WORLD FROM HIS OWN PECULIAR PERSPECTIVE -- AND FOUND IT RIDICULOUS.



TRUE, BUT IF HOWARD CAN PUT UP WITH EARTH'S ABSURDITIES THIS LONG, I CAN MAKE THAT SACRIFICE IF I WANT TO STAY WITH HIM.

AH, LET'S CAN ALL THE CONVERSATION AN' GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD BEFORE THIS SOBBIN' SOUL-SISTER ROUTINE SOAKS OUR SHOES!

BUT HOWARD, YOU DON'T WEAR SH-- HE WAS MEWEWY SPEAKING METAPHOWI-CAWWY, PAUW.

TELL US WHAT MOWE WIKE THE GATE-TO DO, WINDA. KEEPEW, WEE. I MEWEWY YOU'RE THE USE MY MENTAW ABIWITIES PILOT ON TO OPEN THE INTEWDIMEN-SIONAW DOORWAY--HOWARD AND BEVEWY HAVE TO WANT TO GO THOUGH IT.



HOWARD'S WIGHT, HOWEVER-- IT'S TIME FOW US AWW TO SAY FAWEWEEEW.



NEVEW MIND, CWAUDE--JUST HOWD ON NOW AND SING AWONG WITH ME: "BE IT EEW SO HUMBWE, THEWE'S NOOOO PWACE WIKE HOME"...

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME--THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

UNLESS THE BANK'S ABOUT TA FORECLOSE ON THE MORTGAGE!

YEAH, BUT I'D HOPED WE'D BE FLYIN' FIRST CLASS... ?WAAKE BEV BABY, IT'S HAPPENIN'!

I'VE FELT THIS BEFORE-- THE FIRST TIME THE COSMIC AXIS SHIFTED, PLUCKIN' ME OUTTA MY OWN DIMENSION AN' DROPPIN' ME HERE ON EARTH!

OH, HOWARD! YOU TOLD ME IT WOULD FEEL STRANGE--

IN SOME UNKNOWN, UINCANNY MANNER, WINDA WESTER SUBTLY RESHIFTS THE' COSMIC AXIS -- SENDING HER FRIENDS THROUGH THE DOORWAY BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS.

YOU'VE DONE IT, WINDA! THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY!

OH, TOO BAD!

WHY? ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY WANTED?



-- BUT YOU NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT BEING ORGASMIC!



IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THERE ARE
WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS -- WORLDS
UPON WORLDS...

EVERY MAN'S (OR WOMAN'S, OR
DUCK'S) MIND IS A UNIVERSE, AND
BETWEEN THOSE MYRIAD UNIVERSES --

... WHERE REALITIES COLLIDE --
WHERE REASON IS SUSPENDED --



...WORLDS WITHOUT END!



--ARE PLACES LIKE THIS...



-- WHERE ALL AND NOTHING ARE
THE SAME!

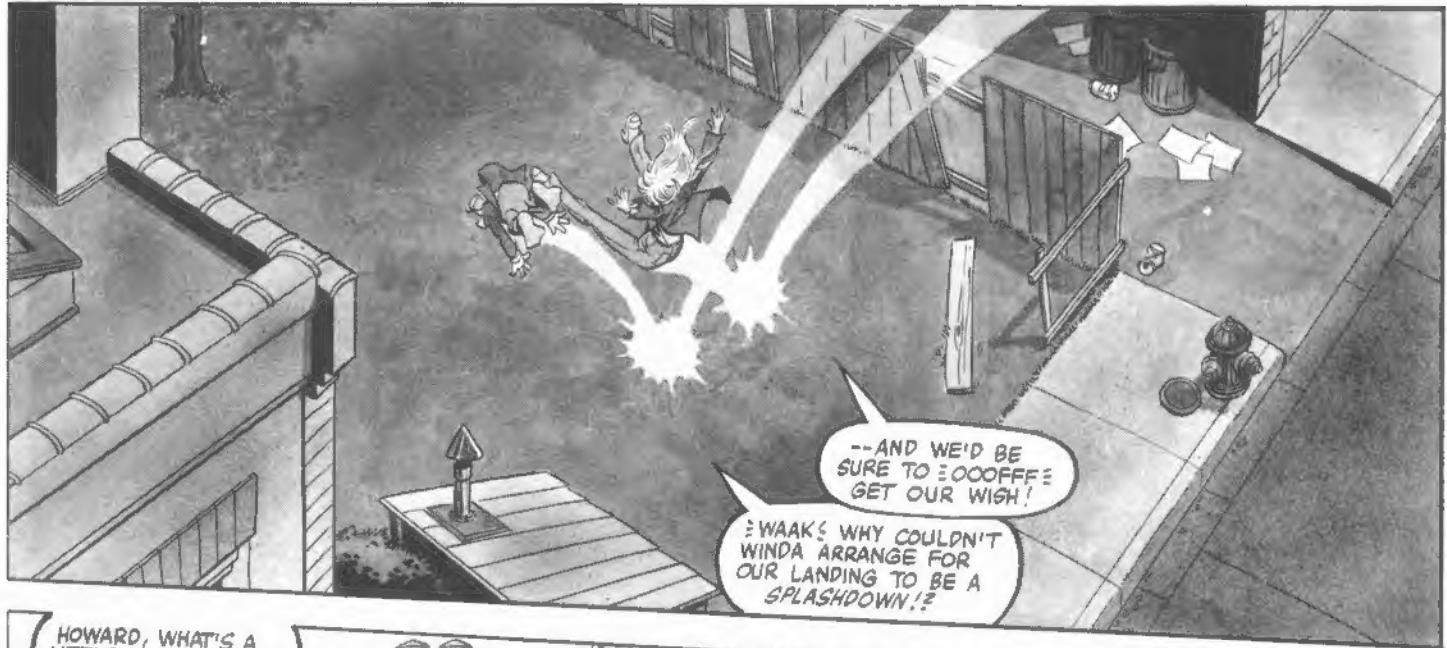
IT IS IN THIS IN-BETWEEN UNIVERSE
WHERE WE REJOIN HOWARD THE
DUCK AND HIS BELOVED BEVERLY
SWITZLER!

ST-STILL THINK THIS
TRIP IS S-SUCH A
THRILL, TOOTS?

WAUGH! I
WANNA GO
HOME!

THAT'S IT, HOWARD!
KEEP THINKING ABOUT
GOING HOME! WINDA
SAID WE'VE GOT TO
WANT IT BAD
ENOUGH --

CHAPTER ONE DUCKWORLD!



WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MISTER? WHAT'S A CLEVELAND? I NEVER HEARD OF IT BEFORE!

THIS HERE'S NEW STORK!

HAVING HAD ONE TALKING DUCK IN HER LIFE, BEVERLY SWITZLER ADJUSTS FAIRLY EASILY WHEN CONFRONTED BY TWO MORE.



HI! IF THIS ISN'T EARTH WE'RE ON THEN IT MUST BE DUCKWORLD, RIGHT? MY NAME'S BEVERLY. WHAT ARE YOURS?

I'M MORTY FOWLER.

AND I'M BOOKER T. WACKERTON!

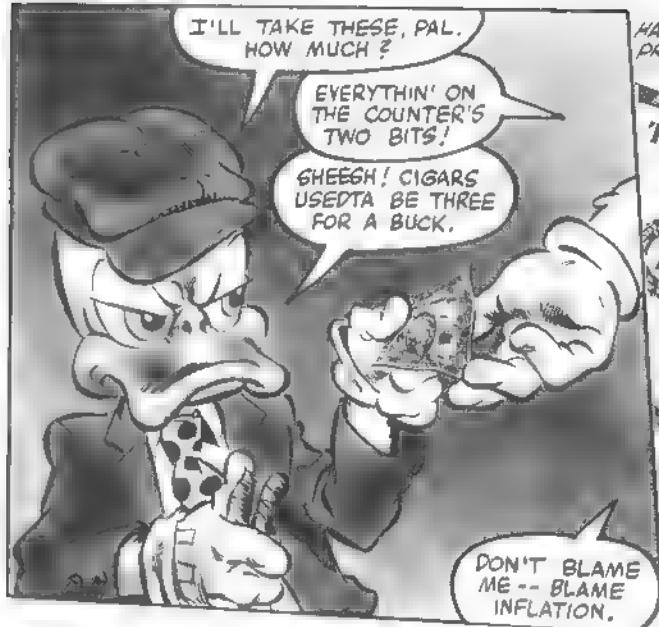
I'M HOME!
HOME!
HOME!

BEV, BABY--THIS IS IT! WINDA DID IT! SHE CAME THROUGH, BLESS HER LISPING LITTLE HEART!

I'M HOME, TOOTS--) OH, HOWARD--
ON DUCKWORLD-- BACK WHERE I BELONG!
I'M SO VERY HAPPY FOR YOU!









THEY STAND STARING-- HOWARD AND BEV. THIS ASSEMBLED THONG OF DUCKWORLD CITIZENRY. THEY ARE YOUNG, OLD, RICH, POOR, FAT, SKINNY, DRUNK, SOBER, SECURE AND INSECURE. YET AT THIS MOMENT, THEY ARE NOT SO MUCH DIFFERENT.

FOR THE EYES OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE DAZED DUCKS AND DRAKES MIRROR THE FEAR, AMAZEMENT, INCREDULITY AND STRANGELY ENOUGH, HOPE SEETHING IN EACH POWELL'S SOUL.

A DUCK-- WITH A GIANT FEMALE HAIRLESS APE!

HE CALLED HER BEVERLY!

AND SHE ANSWERED HIM BACK!

THAT'S RIGHT-- SHE'S B--BUT IT DID! I HEARD HER! I CAN'T REALLY BE THEM-- CAN IT???



ERUPTING
INTO THE
ANARCHIC
ECSTASY OF
A RELIGIOUS
REVIVAL

GIVE US A
SIGN, MASTER
--A TOKEN
OF YOUR
RETURN!

SIGN, SCHMIGN! I WAN'
A SILVERNEER!

I'VE GOT A
SHOE--A
HOLY SHOE!

AND ME, A SLEEVE
--A SACRED SLEEVE!
HOWARD
COMETH,
HALLELUJAH!







CHAPTER TWO BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE . . .

HOME WHEN HOWARD LAST SAW IT, WAS A SIMPLE FRAME DWELLING IN A NEW STORK

IT IS SIMPLE NO LONGER

CONCRETE HAS REPLACED THE CRABGRASS. ARMED GUARDS THE WHITE PICKET FENCE. NEIGHBORING HOUSES HAVE BEEN TORN DOWN TO INCREASE SECURITY

HOME IS HOME NO LONGER. NO ONE COULD LIVE IN THIS FORTRESS THIS TEMPLE!

THIS SHRINE TO THE DEAR DEPARTED HOWARD THE DUCK!

CROWD CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM-- MY CIRCUIT'S DEAD-- IS SOMETHING WRONG? CAN YOU HEAR ME, MAJOR TOM?

KEEP MOVIN', YA CRIPPLES! YA CAN'T ALL DRINK FROM THE SACRED SPRINKLER!

WE OBEY, O GUARDIAN OF THE SHRINE!

ALL PRAISE THE GREAT HOWARD!

DOLLY ME IN FOR A SLOW ZOOM ON THE "HOWARD HOUSE." RIGHT! NICE!

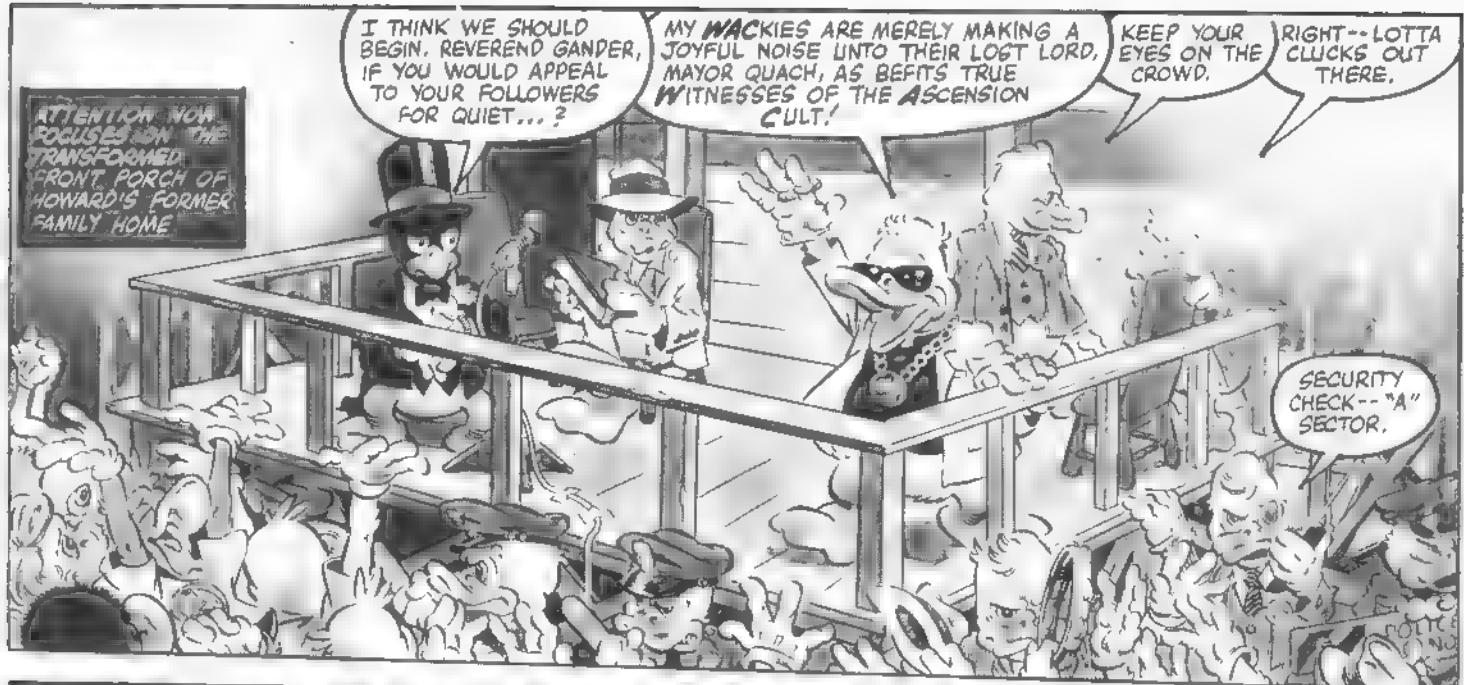


HELLO, TV VIEWERS! THIS IS LANA LINN OF THE GBS NEWS TEAM REPORTING TO YOU FROM OUTSIDE THE WORLD FAMOUS HOME OF THE IMMORTAL HOWARD THE DUCK!

IT IS THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ASCENSION FRIDAY--FIVE YEARS SINCE THE DAY THAT A DUCK NAMED HOWARD DISAPPEARED FROM OUR WORLD--CHANGING THE COURSE OF HISTORY.

THE CROWD HERE IS ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE! FOWL ARE POURING IN FROM EVERYWHERE! THE ATMOSPHERE IS, WELL, WORSHIPFUL!





I, GODFREY GANDER, AS BIG WACKIE--
HIGH PRIEST OF THE WITNESS OF THE
ASCENSION CULT-- THANK YOU, MAYOR
QUACH AND THE FINE CITY OF NEW
STORK FOR HOSTING THIS
GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL!

WE COULDN'T
VERY WELL MOVE
THE HOUSE, GANDER!

WACKIES, YOUR DREAMS ARE
REALIZED; FROM FAR YOU
HAVE COME, BUT TODAY YOU
STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF
YOUR SAVIOR! BEHOLD HIS
DWELLING PLACE... THE
HOWARD HOUSE!

THE
HOWARD
HOUSE

THE
HOWARD
HOUSE!

I CAN
WALK! I'M
CURED!

ANOTHER
MIRACLE!
THE 169TH
TODAY!

THE HOWARD HOUSE?
WITNESSES OF THE ASCENSION
CULT? SAVIOR? HOWARD--???

DON'T LOOK AT ME,
TOOTS-- I JUST GOT
HERE MYSELF!

THANK YOU,
THANK YOU
VERY MUCH, MAYOR QUACH.

THE WORSHIP OF
HOWARD HAS
BROUGHT MANY
VISITORS (AND
MUCH REVENUE)
TO OUR FAIR
CITY OF NEW
STORK--

-- AND, IF ANY ONE FOWL CAN BE
SAID TO HAVE MADE ALL THIS POSSIBLE,
IT IS THAT GREATEST OF OUR LIVING
WRITERS-- THE DRAKE WHO CHRONICLED
THE LAST 24 HOURS OF YOUR--ER--
OUR SAINTED HOWARD THE DUCK,
FRIENDS, I GIVE YOU... TRUMAN
CAPULLTRY!

TRUMAN
CAPOULTRY?

YEAH--A REAL
HOT ITEM ON
THE NEW
STORK TIMES
BEST-SELLER
LIST.

THEY MADE
A MOVIE
OUTTA HIS
BOOK "IN
COLD
WATER".

I
DIDN'T
SEE IT.

BUT WHAT COULD
HE HAVE FOUND TO
WRITE ABOUT ME???

MY FRIENDS, I AM UNDESERVING OF
THIS HONOR. I DID NOT MEAN TO START
A MOVEMENT WHEN I FIRST BEGAN
INVESTIGATING THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING THE LIFE OF HOWARD
THE DUCK.

BUT HOWARD'S STORY ITSELF
WAS SO AMAZING--SO RELEVANT
TO LIFE ON MODERN-DAY DUCK-
WORLD--THAT MILLIONS OF
FOWL HAVE FOUND INSPIRATION
IN MY \$15.95 BOOK CALLED...

TRUMAN CAPOULTRY

DUCKY, YOU--YOU'RE
MORE THAN FAMOUS!
YOU'VE BECOME A
SYMBOL!

BEV, IF THESE CLUCKS
SEE SOMETHIN' IN THE
STORY OF MY LIFE
THAT RELATES TO
THEIR LIVES--THEN
THEY PUT IT THERE!

I WORKED
HARD AT NOT
SETTIN' AN
EXAMPLE FOR
ANYBODY--NOT
EVEN MYSELF!

IF I'M SOME
KINDA SYMBOL
NOW, I'D LIKE
TO KNOW A
SYMBOL OF
WHAT!!

WACKIES, YOU ALL KNOW THE TALE
OF OUR MESSIAH, BUT--THOUGH THE
STORY IS A FAMILIAR ONE--IT DOES
NOT SUFFER IN THE RETELLING!
LISTEN--

--AND BROTHER CAPOULTRY
WILL READ TO YOU--THE
PARABLE OF HOWARD
THE DUCK!

TRUMAN CAPOULTRY
THUMBS TO THE
OPENING PAGE



AND BEGINS TO READ. HIS VOICE MUSHED AND REVERENT HIS WORDS CARRIED BY THE MAGIC OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO EVERY CORNER OF EAGERLY AWAITING DUCKWORLD.





AS TIME PASSED, HOWARD WENT ON TO COLLEGE-- GRADUATING FOUR YEARS OLDER IF NOT FOUR YEARS SMARTER.

THOSE WERE THE WAR YEARS. COLLEGE GAVE HOWARD HIS MUCH-NEEDED DRAFT DEFERMENT, BUT HE PAID A HIGH PRICE FOR IT IN BOREDOM!



IT WAS IN COLLEGE THAT HOWARD'S AVERSION TO HIS MIDDLE-CLASS UPBRINGING BECAME A FULL-SCALE REVOLT. HIS PARENTS HAD WANTED HIM TO BECOME A LAWYER. HIS SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TESTS INDICATED HE WAS MOST SUITED TO BE A MORTICIAN. HOWARD REJECTED BOTH PATHS AND THE MEDIOCRE MORASS OF ACADEMIA--

--TAKING ON A SUCCESSION OF JOBS AND IDENTITIES, SEEKING TO FIND INNER CONTENTMENT BY LOSING HIMSELF!

TO UNDERSTAND HOWARD, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND HIS FEELINGS ON THE LOSS OF INDIVIDUALITY-- THE IMPOWLIZATION HE ENCOUNTERED ON PRESENT-DAY DUCKWORLD.



--SO HOWARD DECIDED THAT HE HAD NO USE FOR SOCIETY. IN DIVORCING HIMSELF FROM IT, HE SET ABOUT TO SYSTEMATICALLY ERASE EVERY TRACE OF HIS EXISTENCE. NEVER UNDERSTOOD, HE WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BE KNOWN!

IT IS HERE THAT ALL RECORDS BEARING HOWARD'S SURNAME WERE ALTERED. HE BECAME MERELY HOWARD THE DUCK--A BLANK IN THE FILES--A NONFOWL WHO, REVOLTED BY SOCIETY, REMOVED HIMSELF FROM IT.

THAT'S RIGHT, BROTHER CAPOUTRY! HOWARD RAGED AGAINST A WORLD HE NEVER MADE--





THE EYES OF TUCKWORLD WERE ON
QUENT STATE. NEWSREEL CAMERAS
CAUGHT EVERYTHING--THE SURGE
OF THE CROWD, THE SUBMERGED
RAGE OF THE RIOT-GARBED
NATIONAL GUARD.

REMEMBER,
WARNING SHOTS
ONLY.

RIGHT--
AIMED AT THEIR
HEADS!

THE
LITTLE
INGRATES!

READY,
DRAKES--
HERE THEY
COME!

WELCOME TO
QUENT ST.
UNIVERSIT
VISITOR PARKING



WHEN THE SHOOTINGS STOPPED, STUNNED STUDENTS STOPPED RUNNING AND STARED IN STUPEFACTION AT THE BODIES OF FOUR OF THEIR FELLOWS LYING SPRAWLED ACROSS THE CAMPUS IN POOLS OF THEIR OWN BLOOD.

...AND THE CALLOUS INDIFFERENCE OF PRESIDENT RICHARD MILLEN DUXON

JUST LIKE SHOOTING SKEET, EH, GYRO?

THE TELEVISION CAMERAS HAD CAUGHT IT ALL -- THE SENSELESS SLAUGHTER OF DUCKLINGS WHOSE ONLY DESIRE WAS NOT TO DIE.



THAT DOES IT, DUXON! I STAYED OUTTA THINGS--LET CLOWNS LIKE YOU DO WHAT YOU WANTED WITH DUCKWORLD--BUT YOU JUST TOOK THAT AS SUPPORT FROM SOME NONEXISTENT "SILENT MAJORITY"!

NOW I SEE THAT NO DRAKE CAN REMAIN AN ISLAND--NOT WHILE SLIMEY SCUM-SUCKERS LIKE YOU ARE RUNNIN' THE SHOW!

WELL, I AINT KEEPIN' QUIET NO LONGER, CRUDBALL! I'M TAKIN' BACK MY RIGHTFUL PLACE IN SOCIETY, AN' ALL I CAN SAY TO YOU IS...

GET DOWN!

GET DOWN, WACKIES! THUS SPAKE HOWARD, DENOUNCING THE DEMAGOGUE--AND THEN DISAPPEARING ON WORLD TELEVISION BEFORE THE EYES OF MILLIONS! IT WAS THAT MIRACLE THAT ENDED DUXON'S RULE...

...AS THE COMMON POULTRY, INSPIRED BY HOWARD'S ASCENSION, TOOK THE REINS OF POWER NTO THEIR OWN HANDS AND ESTABLISHED A NEW SOCIETY--

-- REPRESENTED, OF COURSE, BY THE WITNESSES OF THE ASCENSION CULT!

BUT WE MUST ASK OURSELVES: "WHO WAS HOWARD THE DUCK?" HE WAS A FOWL, LIKE THE REST OF US, WHO KNEW WHEN TO GIVE UP AND WHEN TO...

HE SHOWED US THE SACRED WAY! WHEN LIFE IS A DRAG-- RENOUNCE IT! WHEN SOCIETY SINKS INTO THE SLIME-- SKIP TOWN! BUT IF YOU CAN'T GET IT OFF YOUR BACK...

GET DOWN!

BUT ARE WE LIKE HOWARD? CAN WE SIMPLY ASCEND, LEAVING OUR PROBLEMS BEHIND?

NO!

WE'RE STUCK HERE, FOWL FRIENDS, THUS WE MUST MAKE THE BEST OF OUR INANE LIVES!

ACCEPT!

THAT'S LIFE! SINCE YOU CAN'T LEAVE IT-- LOVE IT! AND IT'S NOT HARD TO HAVE FUN WITH THE WACKIES RUNNING THINGS WHILE YOU ALL...

LOOK! REVEREND GANDER'S SERMON HAS INSPIRED A YOUNG DRAKE TO SPEAK IN TONGUES...

GLL-KKKK- GLAGGLE- GLUUUKK!

GET DOWN, BROTHER!

I--ER--THINK HE JUST SWALLOWED HIS POP-TOP.

NONSENSE! HE HAS ACHIEVED ULTIMATE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY!

WOTTA BUNCH A DOWNERS!

YOU SAID IT, BLINKY!

TRYIN' TA PUSH THEIR TRIP ON EVERYONE ELSE!

WAUGH! THE DOUBLE-TALKIN' MEALY-MOUTHED EXCUSE FOR AN EVANGELIST HAS TWISTED EVERYTHING! THE COSMIC AXIS SHIFTED WHILE I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF TELLIN' DUXON AN' ALL DEMOGOGUES TA GET OUT OF FOLKS LIVES!

I MEANT FOR FOWLS TA GET DOWN AN' FIGHT BACK-- BUT GANDER'S TELLIN' 'EM JUST THE OPPOSITE-- TA SUPPRESS THEIR RAGE AN' TA ACCEPT NO MATTER WHAT'S BEIN' DONE TO 'EM!

HOWARD-- TAKE IT EASY! YOU'LL BUST A BLOOD VESSEL!

LEMME GO, TOOTS, AN' I'LL BUST THAT BOZO'S BEAK!

GET DOWN!

HYGEL, BEVERLY RESTRAINS HOWARD FROM LAUNCHING HIMSELF AT THE REVEREND GODFREY GANDER. RECOGNIZING IN THE DEADLY DEMANOR OF THE EVANGELIST'S SECURITY DUCKS THE COLD STARE OF CULTISTS WHO WILL KILL TO PROTECT THEIR FAITH OR THEIR PAYCHECKS.

HOWARD'S ASCENSION CAUSED A WORLDWIDE UPHEAVAL AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED ORDER OF THINGS THAT LEFT A POWER VACUUM ON DUCKWORLD!

HE OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T WANT TO STICK AROUND FOR YOUR "NEW ORDER."

NO' HE WANTED US TO "GET DOWN" TO THE BUSINESS OF RUNNING THE WORLD, SUCH IS THE MISSION OF THE WITNESSES OF THE ASCENSION CULT--THE WACKIE MOVEMENT--TO GET DOWN TO THE TASK OF SOLVING NOT ONLY OUR OWN PROBLEMS, BUT EVERYONE ELSE'S TOO!



FOR ONE MAGIC
MOMENT, THE
PREACHING STOPS.

THERE IS
STUNNED
SILENCE.

FOLLOWED BY
OUT-BREAK
OF QUESTION
LIKE RIPPLE
THROUGH THE
CROWD--DRAWING
ATTENTION AWAY
FROM THE
SPEAKER'S PLAT
FORM AND THE
ASTONISHED
REV. GANDER.

DEAR
WACKIES,
I AM NOT
DONE--'
THAT'S
WHAT YOU
THINK.'

WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHY?

HOW?

HUH?

THAT'S IT, YOU POOR APOLOGIES FOR
POULTRY--ALL THEM QUESTION MARKS
MEAN YOU'RE FINALLY STARTIN' TO THINK
FOR YOURSELVES INSTEAD A HAVIN'
GANDER AND HIS GOON-SQUAD DO IT
FOR YOU!

'COURSE, I
REALIZE YA PROBABLY
LIKED IT THAT WAY--
LESS STRAIN ON THE
OL' BRAIN--BUT I'LL
BE DAMNED IF I'M
GONNA LET YA OPT
FOR LOBOTOMY IN
MY NAME!

HI!

WHAT I'M
TRYIN' TA TELL
YA IS THAT THE
PARTY'S OVER!
WHAT YA DO NEXT
YA DO ON YER OWN!
NONE O' THIS
"GREAT HOWARD
TAKE THE RAP
FOR ME" BULL-
FEATHERS!

'CAUSE I'VE
COME HOME,
FELLOW
FOWL!

HOWARD THE
DUCK IS BACK!



DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT YOU WOULD DO ON THE DAY YOUR GOD POPPED DOWN FOR A VISIT? I SUFFICIENT TO SAY THAT ON DUCKWORLD THE ENTIRE POPULACE TOOK THE DAY OFF AND DECIDED TO WELCOME HOWARD HOME WITH OPEN ARMS!

GET DOWN!

CHAPTER THREE WEBBED FEET OF CLAY!

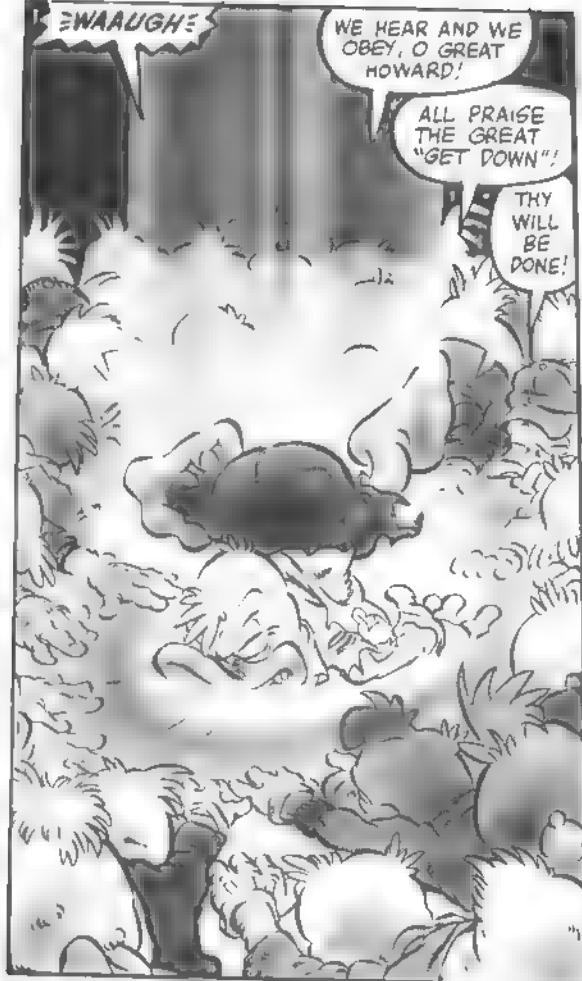
OH, DUCKY--
THEY LOVE
YOU!!

I W-WISH TH-THEY'D
SH-SHOW IT BY
K-KEEPIN' M-ME ON
THE GR-GROUND!

WAALIGHE

FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FOWL-O,
FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FOWL-O,
FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FOWL-O--
WHICH NOBODY CAN DEEE-NY!





WOHA, GANDER! TURN OFF THE SAUCE! I'VE HEARD JUST ABOUT ALL I EVER WANT TA HEAR OF YOUR SICKENIN' SPIEL! I TOLD YA-- THE PARTY'S OVER!

IT AIN'T GONNA BE SO EASY TA PUT WORDS IN THE MOUTH OF "THE GREAT HOWARD" NOW THAT I'M HERE TO SPIT 'EM RIGHT BACK ATCHA!

AN' THE REST OF YA-- YER ALL BOZOS, LETTIN' THIS OVERSTUFFED EVANGELIST TELL YA HOW TA THINK, HOW TA LIVE, HOW TA DREAM! I AIN'T NO SAINT, I AIN'T NO SYMBOL AND I DON'T ACCEPT NO DISCIPLES -- SO DON'T APPLY!

YOU HEAR ME? YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN! GO! DO WHAT YOU WANT! DON'T FOLLOW ANYBODY! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN BY "GET DOWN!"



YOU WANT US TO... THINK? FOR OURSELVES?? TO DO WHATEVER WE WANT???

YAAAY! THE GREAT HOWARD HAS TOLD US TO THINK!

IT'S BEEN SO LONG, I DON'T KNOW IF I...YES! YES, I CAN!

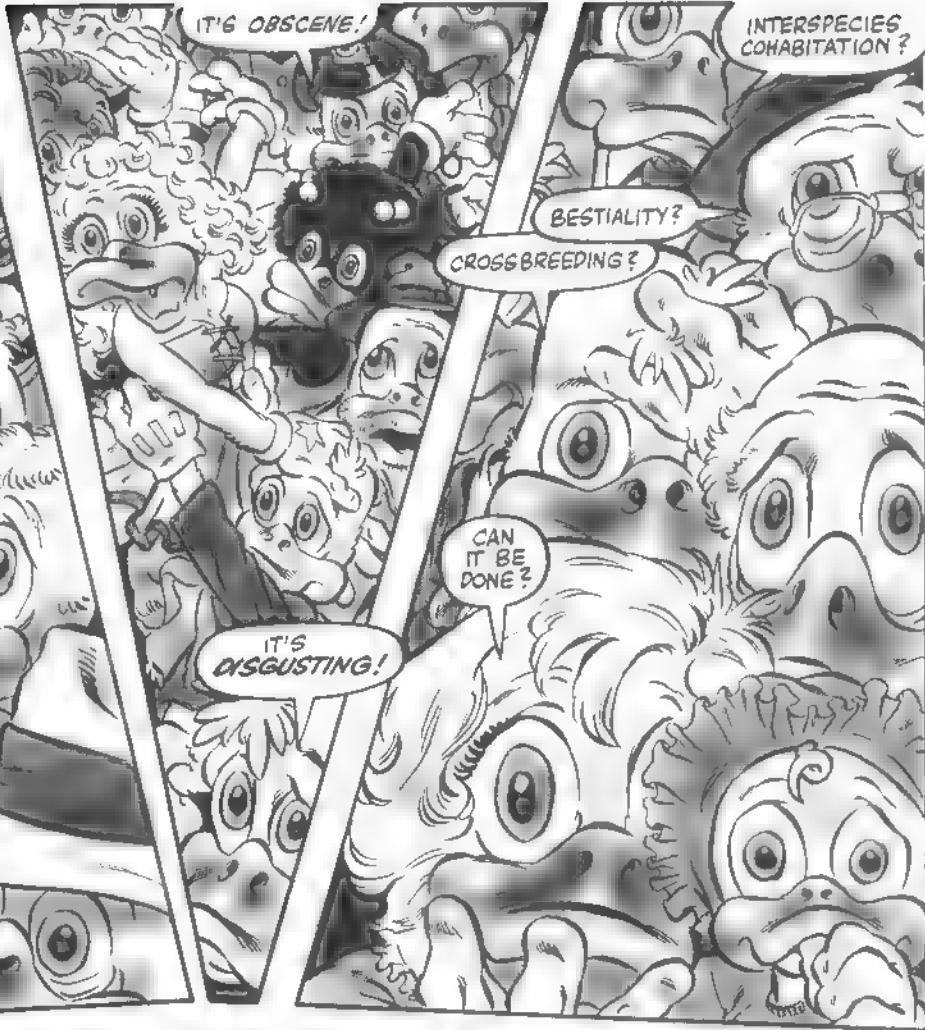


WHY, I HAVEN'T THOUGHT SINCE 19-AUGHT-4!

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M DOING IT RIGHT?

IF IT FEELS GOOD, IT'S RIGHT!





IT AIN'T EASY, IS IT, TOOTS -- BEIN' TRAPPED
IN A WORLD YOU NEVER MADE? IT'S WHAT
I TRIED TO TELL YA I WAS GOIN' THROUGH
EVERY MOMENT I SPENT ON YOUR WORLD!

THE STARES, THE SNICKERS,
THE SLY ASIDES, AND THE SNIPE
INNUENDOES! ON EARTH IT WAS,
"L-LOOK! A TALKING DUCK!"
HERE, THE TABLES ARE TURNED!

I TRIED TA WARN
YA BEFORE WINDA
RESHIFTED THE COSMIC
AXIS! I KNEW THE
CULTURE SHOCK WAS
GOONA BE AS BAD FOR
YOU AS IT WAS FOR
ME!

THAT'S TRUE, DUCKY-- YOU
DID! I-I GUESS I JUST
FORGOT WHY I WANTED TO
COME-- FORGOT THAT I
WANTED TO EXPERIENCE
LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THE COIN-- TO KNOW
FIRSTHAND WHAT YOU'VE
BEEN GOING THROUGH TO
STAY WITH ME!

SO NOW I REALLY
KNOW! IT'S NOT
VERY PLEASANT
BEING DIFFERENT,
IS IT?



...TOGETHER!



CHAPTER FOUR FAME!

TWO DAYS LATER, ON THE TONIGHT SHOW
STARRING JOHNNY QUACKSON...

THE STUNNING
RETURN TO DUCKWORLD
OF A YOUNG DRAKE WHO
HAD BECOME MORE THAN
A MYTH HAS DRAWN FORTH
PEOPLE WHO KNEW AND
LOVED HOWARD WHEN HE
DWELT AMONG US, BUT,
BEFORE WE INTRODUCE
OUR MYSTERY
GUESTS--

--I'D LIKE TO
ASK NOTED AUTHOR
TRUMAN CAPPOULTRY
TO TELL US HOW HE
CAME TO WRITE THE
BLOCKBUSTER BEST-
SELLER THAT MADE
HOWARD THE DUCK
A HOUSEHOLD
NAME.

I'D BE GLAD TO,
JOHNNY! LIKE MOST OF
DUCKWORLD, I WAS WATCHING
MY TELEVISION ON THE DAY OF
HOWARD'S DISAPPEARANCE DURING
THE QUENT STATE MASSACRE! I
MUST SAY IT Affected ME
DREADFULLY!

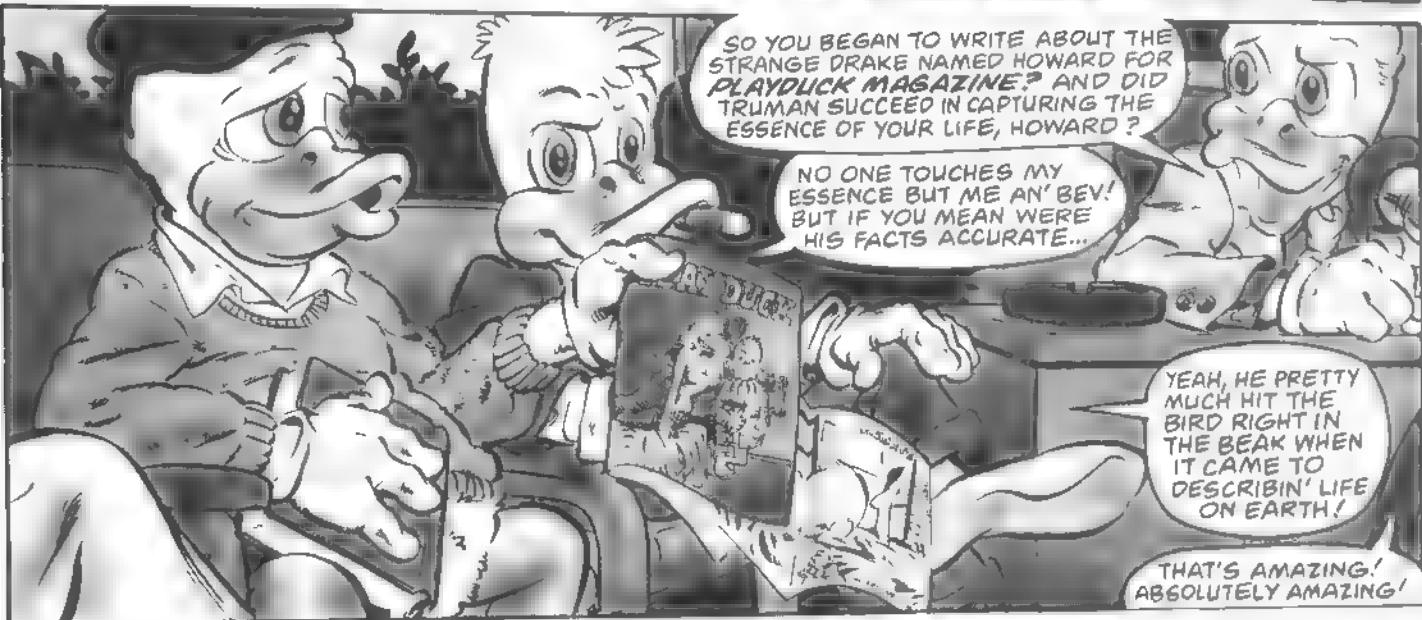
I BEGAN TO HAVE
STRANGE, I GUESS YOU COULD
SAY PRECOGNITIVE DREAMS IN
WHICH I SAW HOWARD ON A
WORLD INHABITED BY INTELLIGENT
HAIRLESS APES-- A WORLD
SEPARATED FROM OUR OWN BY
THE SUBTLEST ALIGNMENT
IN THE COSMIC AXIS!

SO YOU BEGAN TO WRITE ABOUT THE
STRANGE DRAKE NAMED HOWARD FOR
PLAYDUCK MAGAZINE? AND DID
TRUMAN SUCCEED IN CAPTURING THE
ESSENCE OF YOUR LIFE, HOWARD?

NO ONE TOUCHES MY
ESSENCE BUT ME AN' BEV!
BUT IF YOU MEAN WERE
HIS FACTS ACCURATE...

YEAH, HE PRETTY
MUCH HIT THE
BIRD RIGHT IN
THE BEAK WHEN
IT CAME TO
DESCRIBIN' LIFE
ON EARTH!

THAT'S AMAZING!
ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!





THE REUNION OF HOWARD
WITH HIS FAMILY IS
SEAMED ALL OVER
DUCKWORLD!

QUIT PLAYIN' WIT' DEM
MICRODUCKS AN'
WATCH DIS!

WANNA
SPACE GLIDER
FOR YER TIME
TRIPSTER?

NAH, BUT
I'LL GIVE
YA AN EVIL
AQUACKER!

IT'S
HISTORICAL!

NOW HOWARD'S
EMBRACIN' HIS MOTHER!
AIN'T DAT TOUCHIN'?

MOM!

HOWARD--
MY
DUCKLING!

THERE ARE SOME, HOWEVER, UNTOUCHED BY FAMILIAL EMOTIONS, WHO REACT TO HOWARD'S HAPPINESS IN QUITE

I'M BEVERLY--
AND I'M VERY PLEASED
TO MEET YOU.

MY BOY ALWAYS HAD STRANGE
TASTES, BUT I GUESS HE KNOWS
WHAT HE LIKES!

WAUGH! YOU
SEE HOW HOWARD'S
RETURN IS ALREADY
WARPING DUCKWORLD'S
VALUES!

THEY'RE
UNQUESTIONINGLY
ACCEPTING HIM
AND HIS HAIR-
LESS APE
SLUT!

ONE
TENET OF
YOUR WACKIE
CULT WAS
"ACCEPTANCE,"
WASN'T IT,
GANDER?

HAVE NO FEAR!
MOST OF DUCKWORLD
DOES NOT YET REALIZE
THE PRECISE NATURE
OF THEIR BELOVED
HOWARD'S RELATION-
SHIP WITH THIS...
"HUMAN"!

QUACKSON'S NEXT
GUEST WILL MAKE
WHO AND WHAT MS.
BEVERLY SWITZLER
IS APPARENT TO
ALL, HOWEVER!



APPARENTLY...

WOMAN, GET
DEM KIDS
TO BED!

AW, I
WANNA
LOOK AT
THE
NAKED
APE!

I KNEW
WE SHOULD
NEVER HAVE
SUBSCR'D
TO CABLE-
TV!

CAPOUSTRY,
GET THAT
DRAPE
AROUND
BEV!

I'M GONNA
GET MY HANDS
AROUND VON
CLUCK'S
THROAT!

THE
HECK WITH
NUDITY--
I WANNA
SEE THE
VIOLENCE!





HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT IS SO UPSETTING ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A DUCK AND A HUMAN?

SIMPLY PUT HOWARD'S COHABITATION WITH BEVERLY THREATENS SPECIES SURVIVAL!

THE THOUGHT OF GOING THE WAY OF THE DODO OR BEING REPLACED BY SOME NEW CROSS-BREED OF FOWL AND HUMAN FEMALE IS MORE THAN THE CITIZENRY OF EITHER EARTH OR DUCKWORLD CAN TAKE!!

THIS IS WHEN A BLOCK OF IDIOTS SUCH AS HOWARD MENACES THE MORAL CODES WHICH BIND EARTH'S FABRIC TOGETHER. WE REACT!! ONE FOR NEVER, TOGETHER FOREVER!!

CHAPTER FIVE DUCK-HUNT

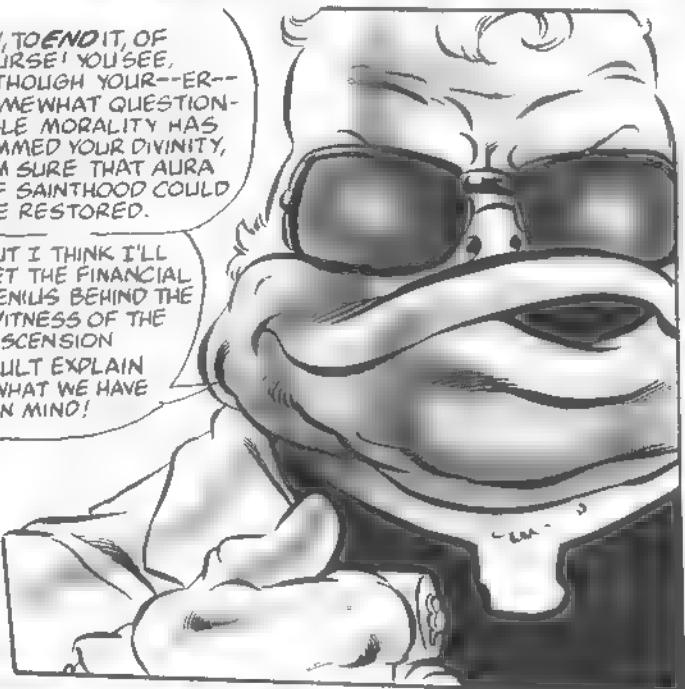






WHY, TO END IT, OF COURSE! YOU SEE, ALTHOUGH YOUR--ER--SOMWHAT QUESTIONABLE MORALITY HAS DIMMED YOUR DIVINITY, I'M SURE THAT AURA OF SAINTHOOD COULD BE RESTORED.

BUT I THINK I'LL LET THE FINANCIAL GENIUS BEHIND THE WITNESS OF THE ASCENSION CULT EXPLAIN WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND!



YOU'RE LOOKING AT
MY FIRST DIME,
PICKED UP IN MY YOUTH
IN THE SLUMS OF
NEW STORK!

SIR

NANCY

65

STOP

IT WAS A DUCK-EAT-DUCK WORLD
THEN, WHERE ONLY
THE TOUGH SURVIVED!

"I PARLAYED THAT
DIME INTO A VAST
INDUSTRIAL EMPIRE--

--BUILDING MY FORTUNE
BY HOOK AND CROOK!

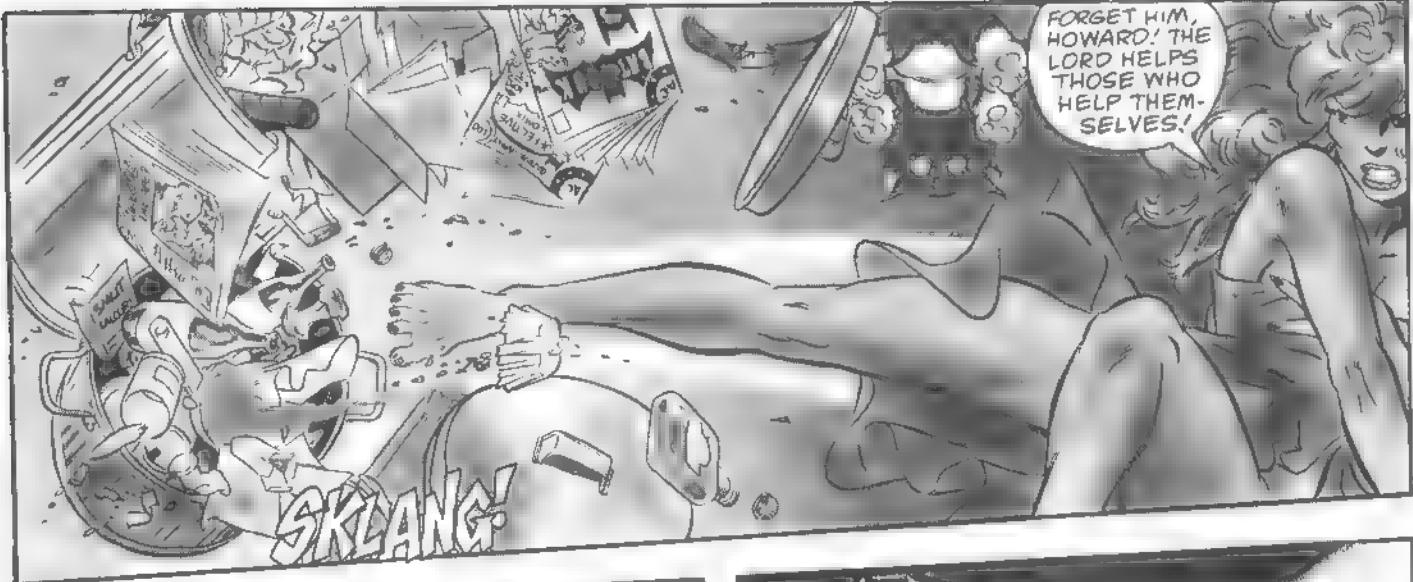
BUT BY FAR THE MOST LUCRATIVE VENTURE I EVER
INVESTED IN WAS THE WACKIE CULT, WHOSE PROFITS
RAN INTO THE MILLIONS!"

FOR IT TO CONTINUE TO YIELD A PROFIT,
I'M AFRAID YOU MUST AGAIN DISAPPEAR
FROM DUCKWORLD...PERMANENTLY!

STRANGE, YOU SOT-
SOBER UP! YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE THAT CAN
GET US OUTTA HERE!

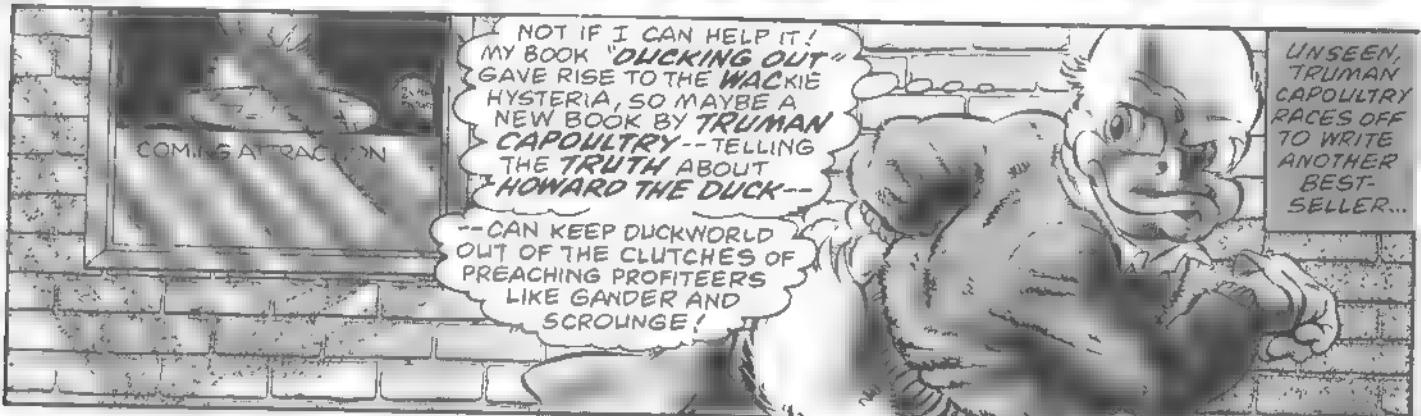
HICE

OH,
MY!

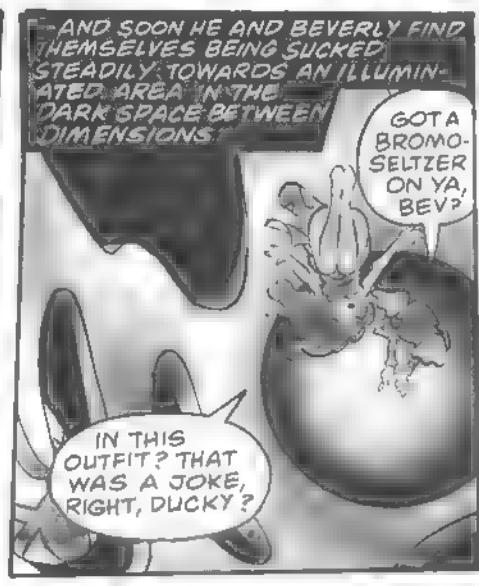








WHILE, TUMBLING THROUGH THE VOID OF UNSPACE, HOWARD THE DUCK AND BEVERLY SWITZLER FIND THEMSELVES BACK WHERE THEY BEGAN AT THE START OF OUR STORY!







STRANGE WORLDS & FORBIDDEN PLACES
OF DEADLY BEAUTY

BIZARRE ADVENTURES 2

INTRODUCING ALL NEW CHARACTERS
ALL NEW STORIES

by DENNY O'NEIL & GENE COLAN
LYNN GRAEME & JOHN BUSCEMA
STEVE SKATES & NED SONNTAG
LYNN GRAEME & FRANK MILLER
MIKE BARR & GENE COLAN
ROGER STERN & JIM SHERMAN

A MARVELOUS EXPERIENCE

On Sale August

LUDKO
'80

THE FAR-OUT, OFF-THE-WALL STORY BEHIND

STREET PEEPLE

TRIP. SPEED. ACID ROCK. HIPPIE. YIPPIE. WEATHERMEN.

If these words mean something to you, you're either a survivor of the tumultuous sixties or a watcher of the Late-Late Show. Wow! It was like, far out, you know? Flower children — into yoga, natural foods, and drugs — thought that by just sending out "good vibes" they could make the world a better place. The Weathermen, on the other hand, thought that the only way to make a better world was to blow up the old one. And they gave it a serious try. The result? The seventies and now the eighties, with hippies and repressed idealists scrambling for a buck, looking in instead of out, looking out for "number 1" rather than trying to make a community of mankind.

It's all a little sad.

We were fortunate indeed that precognition is not a common talent, for if we'd seen what our dreams would end in, we wouldn't have enjoyed ourselves so much.

STREET PEEPLE is a look at the contrary, silly, violent, but — most of all — *innocent* sixties. All the characters are based on myself, my friends, and people I knew. There were real-life models for Qwami, Cheyanne, Riff, Moonchild, and even Horsemeat. Mr. Gloom lived in my apartment building on 14th street in New York City, and Officer Hip used to patrol Greenwich Village.

But this doesn't mean that STREET PEEPLE will be a realistic strip: to the contrary. Like memory, the background events will all flow together, with historical events jumbled. STREET PEEPLE, you see, is not so much about a time as it is about a feeling, a way of perceiving the world: the sixties as state-of-mind.

Another important point:

As you look at this story you'll notice immed-

iately that it's a real departure from the representative sort of Marvel strip. Indeed, this, folks, is another high-wire act by yours truly. Why do I do these things to myself? Why can't I just play it comfortable and safe, not make waves, keep a low profile? Sigh.

Well, actually, I was hired to take chances and to try different kinds of things. For as vital, energetic and creative as Marvel is, it *must* keep growing and exploring new ideas in order to retain its dynamism. Still, as the risk-taker, I must say I occasionally look down at the dizzying fall and question my sanity.

STREET PEEPLE is a good example. I showed this episode to everyone in the Marvel offices: Jim, other editors, mailroom guys, statmen, secretaries — I missed the cleaning lady because I had an early dinner date — trying to get some idea of what *your* reaction would be. Result?

Some hated it. Some loved it. Somebody said it was "too sophisticated" for the HOWARD THE DUCK book, and someone else expressed doubt that anyone was interested in the sixties. Every single person had a completely individual reaction. What we have here, I've decided, is the world's first comic book Rorschach test!

So read it carefully, if only for therapeutic purposes, and let me know real quick what you think of it, because I'm having an anxiety attack. Also, I'd like your feedback in order to make Chapter Two, "Dynamite, Baby!" better than Chapter One.

Meanwhile, I'm going to take things a little easy for a while: get mellowed out, hang loose, keep my cool. Things get pretty tense up here on the tightwire!

Lynn



WRITING: LYNN GRAEME

ART:NED SONNTAG

AND A DELICIOUS TIME
IT WAS, TOO... I HAD
EVERYTHING: IDEALS.
ANARCHY. COSMIC LOVE.
CHEAP EXPLOITATION.

I NEVER THOUGHT
I'D MEET HER, AND YET
THERE SHE IS! TALL,
BLONDE, CALIFORNIAN!

WHEE!!

THE ONLY THING IT DIDN'T
HAVE WAS THE ABILITY TO SEE
INTO A DISMAL FUTURE.
OH, WHAT A LOVELY DECADE!

BLACK FEMINIST
SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION...

IT IS SHE, MY PRINCESS
MY GODDESS! HOW LONG
HAVE I BEEN SEARCHING
FOR HER? SINCE BEFORE
FOREVER. AND IT MUST HAVE
BEEN KARMA THAT LED ME
TO GRADUATE MAGNA CUM
LAUDE FROM THE RINGLING
BROS.-BARNUM & BAILEY
CLOWN SCHOOL OF JUGGLING
SO AS TO BE READY FOR
HER - MY ANGEL!

ALL I HAVE IS YOURS!!

AND SO RIFF, COSMIC CLOWN, GIVES ALL HE
POSSESSES (WELL, SO IT AIN'T MUCH) TO HIS
DEITY....

...WHO DOESN'T NOTICE.

SHATTERED!!

ANNIHILATED!

BUMMED OUT...

SAVE THE
WHALE

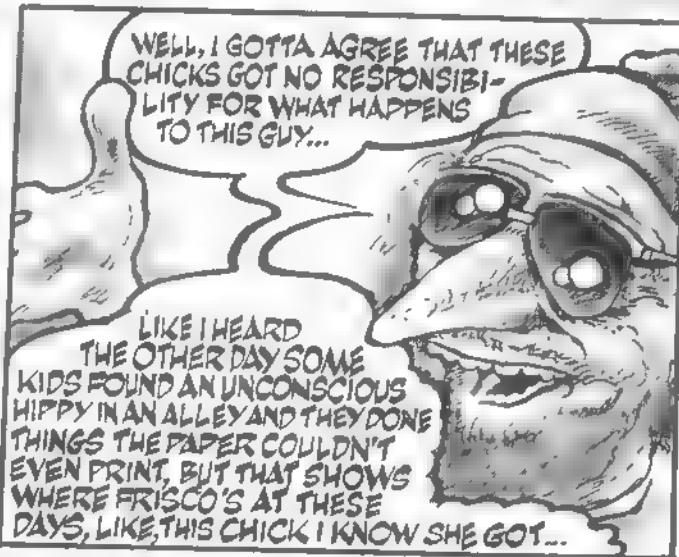
REAL UPSET

BUT WHAT'S THIS?
AN OUTBREAK OF
BIKER EXUBERANCE!

SUPEREXPLOITATION
OF BLACK WOMEN
AND WORKERS

HEY DERE
CAT!







AND SO A SUPPOSEDLY UNCONSCIOUS DUDE IS CARRIED OUT OF THE PARK...AND INTO THE LIVES OF THESE THREE WOMEN...CHEYANNE...NATIVE CALIFORNIAN...NEW&UNKNOWING OWNER-OF-HIS-HEART; QWAMI...FIERCE BATTLES FOR A NEW WORLD...AND MOONCHILD...SHE WHOSE GIRTH IS OUTMATCHED ONLY BY HER LOVING HEART...



CRASHING, AT LEAST IN THE MEANTIME, IN THE STREET PEEPLE'S PAD, RIFF LIES ON THE COUCH, MOANING IN FEIGNED DISTRESS, PRETENDING TO AMNESIA...

YEAH WELL, SOON'S YOU FIGURE OUT WHO YOU ARE YOU GO DIG IT?

LISTEN, YOU CAN STAY 'TIL YOU'RE BETTER, OKAY? WE OWE YOU A LOT... AND ANYWAY YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU EAT RIGHT... JUST GIVE ME A FEW DAYS AND I'LL MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A MILLION...

HEY MAN,
WE AIN'T RUNNIN' NO
WELFARE ORGANIZATION
HERE, YOU DIG? SPECI-
ALLY FOR LAZY WHITE
BOYS AFTER A LITTLE...

I SWEAR TO YOU, PEOPLE
THAT RAP ON THE HEAD DROVE
MY ENTIRE LIFE OUT OF MY
HEAD! I'M AN UN-CARVED
BLOCK OF WOOD! AN EMPTY
PAGE! A MIRROR WITH NO
REFLECTION!

A HARMLESS SOUL WHO
JUST NEEDS A BREAK!
AH, C'MON, GIRLS!

SUCKER!

I'VE COME TOO FAR TO TURN BACK, NO MATTER
THAT THIS DUDE IS HERE... THE REVOLUTION CAN
ONLY GO FORWARD IF EACH OF US IS WILLING TO
LIVE FOR THE CAUSE... OR DIE FOR IT!

YES, IT WAS A LOVELY DECADE,
ENERGIZED BY ACID ROCK
AND... REVOLUTION!

IDY
IDY

STAY TUNED!

Wise Quacks

Yes, please pay strict attention.

As I more or less anticipated, the mail on HOWARD THE DUCK #3 — our, or rather, my — antinuclear Christmas Story was as controversial as the story itself. Your missives were as heated as a nuclear meltdown. Rather than decide to create some sort of artificial balance, I've decided to divide this installment of Wise Quacks into PRO and CON, thus letting you all fight it out amongst yourselves...

—Bill Mantlo

PRO

Dear Bill, Gene, and Dave,

Many thanks, fellas, for what was probably the greatest Christmas story since Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

A Christmas for Carol reflected, I'm sure, what many people feel in these days of hype and overadvertising. The wish for a place where every day is like Christmas is a worldwide dream, a dream we all hope will become a reality. I hope we will see Carol and Claude in a future story. Up until HTD #3 I'd thought that either the Bong stories or the first two issues of the new HTD Magazine were the best of the Howard series. I was wrong. *A Christmas for Carol*, with its incredible clichés (Sunquist, from Florida?) and its great characters was just extraordinary, a great story, one of the best of the Seventies. Keep it up!

Rob Morganbesser
1121 37th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Creators of Genius.

With HOWARD THE DUCK #3 we've come full circle. Mr. Mantlo has to be congratulated for blossoming into the premier satirist in comics today. Now on to HTD #3: What a delightful way to spend my Christmas Eve! *A Christmas for Carol* was a most meaningful Christmas tale. You've incorporated the commercial aspects of Christmas into a brilliantly hilarious story and given us a holiday tale to make Dickens proud. The dialogue speaks for itself. The scene on Page 23 where Howard mimics a Ralph Kramden gesture was priceless. And the art! I have followed Mr. Colan's endeavors from DAREDEVIL

through DRACULA. I've seen his work for Warren and his occasional stints on other Marvel mags, and I've come to the following conclusion: There is no such thing as bad Gene Colan artwork. Every other artist has, at one time or another, produced substandard work. Not so Gene Colan. Regardless of who inks him, Gene has given his best at all times. His uniquely fluid style will someday make comic historians realize just how great this man truly is. That this realization does not fully exist now is due to the fact that Gene's enormous output makes his work seem almost effortless. Unfortunately, in fandom it is the infrequent contributor who is most frequently noticed, not the artists like Gene who produce vast volumes of high quality work month after month. Colan's Howard is the most pitiable creature I've ever seen. You have to love him. The highlight of HTD #3 was the first page. I could almost see into Howard's soul in that scene. I really thank you, Mr. Colan, for the pleasure you've brought me.

My final praise for HTD #3 concerns the cover. I couldn't believe it when I first heard that Marvel had actually commissioned Jack Davis to render a cover. I was somewhat disappointed, though. Mr. Davis' cover looked the same as his MAD Magazine work. I guess I expected too much, having hoped for artwork more like that he produced during his E.C. days, but I still enjoyed the change from the regular Marvel cover artists.

Well, folks, it's getting late, so I'll pack it in with one last query: Is there any possible way that someday we might see a Carl Barks HOWARD THE DUCK story? I'm sure every duck fan in the comic reading world has wondered

about this monumental possibility. But, ah, miracles don't happen, do they — except on 34th Street.

In closing, and despite the fact that if this letter sees print at all it won't be till sometime in the spring, I'll still express Seasons Greetings to all at Marvel, and especially to Bill and Gene, who made my Christmas even merrier than I would have thought possible.

Michael J. Vassallo
31-25 68th Street
Woodside, NY 11377

ten years from now, will be a little confused by references to Anita Bryant and the many antinuclear statements made throughout the mag.

You want to know something? I like it. It's a nice diversion from the kiddie comics, and I'd like you to keep it up.

Something else I'd like to see is shorter stories. There's no law that requires one long story every issue. A few eight, ten or twelve pagers in one issue would be a nice change of pace.

The text-piece, *Duck Soup*, was poorly written. It may be okay to use that kind of English when you're speaking, but this "Hey, dig what's happenin' to everyone's favorite fowl!" vocabulary was improper for a factual piece.

But, overall, I enjoyed HOWARD THE DUCK #3 very much

Gary Dunauer
(Address withheld by request)

Like, hey, Gary m'man, I dig where you're comin' from. I guess I been gettin' too heavy into Tom Wolfe lately. Sorry, effendi. I'll straighten up my act... next time.

As for shorter stories (sigh!) I sit down every issue thinking, "Okay, Mantlo — think short!" but, somehow, as soon as my fingers start caressing the typewriter keys, Howard himself seems to take over, saying, "Integrity, kid! I need space t'breath!" The stories just grow from there, as you can see by this issue's epic. But I'm trying. Though next issue's tale is almost as long as this one, I promise to try to fit two tales into HTD #8 — and maybe to get another artist to handle the second one, thus satisfying the experimentalists among you!

Howard Hessel
14 Polo Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

After I said all those nice things about Gene Colan, you want Frank Brunner back on HTD? Well, Frank is sometimes considered the Howard the Duck artist, although Howard was first delineated by Val Mayerick. I'd like to see both those talented guys take a crack at a repeat performance here in HTD. So why don't I ask them? I dunno, maybe I will. As for color, that depends purely on economics. If HTD sells ten times better than any other Marvel Magazine, I'm sure going to full-color would be considered. If not, well, use your imagination and your Venus Paradise pencils.

To the Editor,

HOWARD THE DUCK is a contemporary magazine. It appears to be written in such a manner that the reader in 1980 can identify with exactly what the main character is talking about. Marvel's 40 cent comics, on the other hand, are written without reference to current events. For example, I can read an issue of the FANTASTIC FOUR or the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN of, say, ten years ago and understand it completely. But someone reading the current issue of HOWARD THE DUCK in 1990,

Dear HTD Staff,
Re: HOWARD THE DUCK #3.
Let's take this step-by-step, starting with the...

COVER: Getting the great Jack Davis to do the cover was a stroke of genius. My hat's off to you, Lynn. Now how about getting some other cover artists — like Bob Larkin, John Buscema, John Byrne, and maybe even Frank Brunner — to take a whack at HTD?

COVER LOGO: I don't know why everyone is so upset with the new logo. I personally think it's great. It symbolizes the change from conventionality to a more loose, contemporary style. It shows more freedom and basically represents the same changes that Howard and the magazine are going through. The only thing I object to this is the dropping of the question mark. The question mark completes the symbolization

of Howard's character, implying mystery, enigma and confusion.

FRONTISPICE: This is a perfect opportunity to exercise your new artistic freedom. Use it well.

CONTENTS PAGE: Welcome, Lynn Graeme, and may your stay at Marvel be a happy one. (What's an Insulting Editor?)

A Christmas for Carol:

Beautiful, touching, fascinating, hilarious, satirical, ironic (Whew! I'm running out of adjectives!) interesting, provoking, biting and, generally, excellent. This story is, I believe, the best HTD story to date. It skillfully satirizes the fuel shortage, nuclear power and Christmas commercialism. But, more importantly, it maintained a delicate balance between seriousness and hilarity. I wanted to burst out laughing yet, at the same time, to stop and think. HOWARD THE DUCK has finally reached the point it seemed to always be striving for; the perfect midline between provocative literature and escapist fantasy. This is the point Steve Gerber could never reach, always leaning too heavily on the serious side. (The closest he ever got to balance was in the HTD #1 color comic.) But be careful! This is a very thin tightrope, and I hope to see you stay on it and not fall.

Bill Mantlo's use of subtle undertones and his handling of small details rounded out the tale, and I left it feeling strangely satisfied. It is this handling of the fine points that make for a great writer.

Gene Colan has, to my mind, become the definitive HTD artist, surpassing even Frank Brunner, whose work heretofore defined the Duck. The black-and-white media enhances the sharp clarity of his work (and I'm sure part of the praise for this must go to Dave Simons) something which was noticeably lacking in the color comic, although I would like to see a HOWARD THE DUCK story in the pages of MARVEL SUPER-SPECIAL.

DUCK SOUP: Excellent summary of the Howard saga, pulling together all the loose ends. A valuable reference for new readers.

All in all, HOWARD THE DUCK #3 was a masterpiece, beautifully executed; an issue I shall always treasure. The Age of Howard the Duck has dawned with glory! Keep up the good work.

Albert Kim
52 Willow Lane
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Ah, yes! Greedy Killervatt, that nuclear nightmare from the pages of HOWARD THE DUCK #3 and from creator Leonard Riff's ALL-ATOMIC COMICS. Len graciously allowed me to borrow his symbol of nuclear nastiness and, by way of thanks, I'd like to encourage anyone who's interested

in scaring the pants off him or herself with a hard-hitting account of the perils of nuclear power to send \$1.50 to Len, c/o Educomics, Box 40246, San Francisco, California 94140 for a copy of ALL-ATOMIC COMICS #1. Also coming up is the all-new ENERGY COMICS #1.

Dear Mr. Mantlo,

I simply must commend you for *A Christmas For Carol* in HTD #3. It was the most well-rounded Duck tale I've read since the days of Steve Gerber. Sure, the stealing-of-Christmas bit was taken off the shelf and dusted off a bit, but Pinball Lizard and Greedy Killervatt added the necessary zaniness. The moral thing with Carol was a nice touch too, and not overdone.

One thing that plagues me though; that short flashback to Duckworld in the midst of the story. Surely you are going to give us a whole tale about Howard's early days in and upcoming issue now that you've piqued our interest?

Thomas L. Czaplicki
PO Box 31
Lincoln Park, MI 48146

You know the old saying, Thomas? Ask and ye shall receive...?

CON

Dear Editor,

I'll try to keep this brief since I know that complaining about the conception of a satirical story is usually futile (quite apart from whether or not the complaint is justified). *A Christmas for Carol* in HTD #3 started off to be a very engaging story, a modern Christmas parable of a very high order. Carol's modern juvenile problems and vulnerabilities were played off nicely against Howard's defiant world-weariness. And, in meeting Santa Claus both in Cleveland and at the North Pole, one had the feeling of being drawn into a situation that was both wacky and impossible, but nice nevertheless. In confronting the Santa Claus myth head-on, one also found that it could never be what it has been portrayed as being, but it was still close enough to the myth to be satisfying and not a disappointment.

But the whole thing started to fall apart with the introduction of the nuclear power plant and Greedy Killervatt (and it eventually fell totally to pieces). Okay, so nuclear power may be a "Bad Thing", but tagging it and its proponents (even in a satirical context) as being responsible for plotting the downfall of Christmas is really carrying matters too far (as well as being totally nonsensical, even within the context of the story). It reminds me of those World War I propaganda posters which

accused the German soldiers of murdering and eating innocent babies (rather an overstatement). Bill Mantlo is a skilled writer, often producing good work, but his well-known political tendencies often get in the way of his work. I was a great fan of HTD's color comic, but since moving to magazine size the stories seem to have lost all their lighthearted touch and have become tinged with cynicism.

Oh, yes — Jack Davis is a fine artist, but his duck on the cover of HTD #3 does not look the least bit like Howard.

T.M. Maple
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Put plain and simply, T.M., I am unalterably opposed to nuclear power and equate its proliferation on a scale of horror equal to that perpetuated by the Nazis during World War II. There they did, if not eat, at least torture, maim, and massacre millions of innocent people. Though not yet on a massive scale, bables conceived during the Three Mile Island disaster in Pennsylvania have already died at birth. Nuclear plant and atomic workers are beginning to show the signs of irretrievable radiation poisoning. Army veterans exposed to atomic test blasts are dying of radiation-related diseases, as are groups of Pacific Islanders inadvertently exposed to atomic radiation. I wrote HTD #3 as a plea for a sane energy program, to make my readers think — if not agree — about the options (i.e., solar, wind power, water power, etc) before accepting whatever the pronuclear forces pronounce as gospel. I also wrote HTD #3 to make people laugh. With everything else going on in the world, laughter is one of the few things left that can help us make it through the night. Oh, and T.M., next time sign your real name, okay?

Dear Marvel,

I just want to say that the cover of HOWARD THE DUCK #3 was the worst cover I've ever seen on a Marvel mag. I almost didn't buy the issue because of it. Now don't get me wrong, I don't mind the artist so much, it's just that his version of Howard isn't right for this mag. Treat HTD like you would EPIC or DRACULA, with covers that can be appreciated by your readers, and not like the mag should be read by five year olds.

Dale Sherman
441 Faculty Drive
Fairborn, OH 45324

Okay, we've got a cover controversy here, pilgrims! Any other views?

Ho! Ho! Ho!

I thought *A Christmas for Carol* was perhaps the worst use of the

Santa Claus legend since *Santa Claus vs. the Martians*. Santa with a machine gun? Also, you will be surprised to hear that there are people who feel that thermonuclear energy is a viable possibility and does not represent evil incarnate. Gerber was at his worst when he started preaching, Bill, and so are you.

By the way, why don't you create your own characters anymore? You're getting as bad as Roy Thomas at borrowing other people's ideas!

John C. Hess
27 Pineview Hts.
Avon, NY 14414

Santa Claus with a machine gun? Why didn't I think of that?! Maybe I'll swipe the idea for this year's Christmas tale. Hey, John... thanks!

Sorry, Bill —

Just the thought of a HOWARD THE DUCK Christmas story was worth twice the price of admission, but you blew it. Bah! Humbug! Special Christmas Issue? HTD #3 was anything but special! It was the biggest flop I've ever read, and I've read a lot of flops!

The tale started out very well. The scenes with the Duck and Carol were a bit trite, but still well-handled. I say trite because every Christmas we get the same bit about how commercial Christmas is, and somebody is usually away from home on Christmas in the comics, and somebody always waxes nostalgic... even though Howard's flashback was handled with tenderness. Nothing new so far. Then comes Santa Claus, and what should have been an excellent fable about the spirit of Christmas turns into a lecture on the danger of nuclear power. WHAT DOES NUCLEAR POWER HAVE TO DO WITH CHRISTMAS, ANYWAY????!! I doubt that the young adults who read your magazine would disagree with you (or very few would, actually) so why the big lecture? What bothered me wasn't your stance, but your handling of it. There was no balancing of the issue, no one to feel for. We don't even have a character with whom to share a point of view. It was all assumed, like the grass is green, water is wet, jogging is good, nuclear is bad. All anyone ever did was stick their fingers up their noses and say, "Oh, now I see!" This is hardly an issue assumed by everyone to be bad, like drugs or child abuse. You needed to prove your point, and you failed!

I wouldn't accept HTD #3 as a parody of *The China Syndrome* let alone as a Christmas story in the tradition of Dickens. It was as if you decided to give us a lesson in the midst of the dessert, the hard hole in the doughnut. There was no character development, no sym-

pathetic characters, no plotline, nothing! You stuck the story you really wanted to do, Carol's relationship to her folks and to Howard, into a lecture on nuclear power! It showed! There wasn't any sense of timing at all! My God, haven't you ever heard of continuity? I couldn't believe Bill Mantlo penned this disaster. You're too good, Bill.

I really hate writing nasty letters to people I respect, but I do it because I care about the mag you're putting out. I suppose I'll buy HTD #4 for curiosity's sake, but I hope things pick up. Lay off the lecturing, and stop it with the sex. I don't want to be left with the impression that I set my expectations for HOWARD THE DUCK too high.

Glenn Dressler
RR #2, Box 191AA
Kanakee, IL 60901

In retrospect, I have to agree with you about the pacing of *A Christmas for Carol*, Glenn. I feel now as if I sort of lost control after Santa put in his appearance. Jim Shooter's taken me to task for that and for the "lecturing" ... and rightly so. That's not to say that I regret what I tried to do or say in HTD #3, only that I'll do it better next time.

Dear Marvel,

Thanks for another first. Bill Mantlo is probably the first 6 year old comic book writer. I can tell Bill's age by the juvenile stories he turns out for HOWARD THE DUCK. If I was about fifteen years younger I would probably enjoy this book.

I have a suggestion. Why don't you let little Billy's father write the book? You know, the Bill Mantlo who writes the best new book around, THE MICRONAUTS? That Bill tries to appeal to the older reader. He doesn't rely on cuteness to make a story.

I see where Howard returns to his own world in an upcoming issue. Who cares? This book is supposed to be about a Duck in a world he never made.

The cover of HTD #3 was the highlight and only good part of the entire issue. Jack Davis, in one picture, captured more of Howard's essence than Mantlo has in his last 7 or so stories. Maybe Jack Davis should write HTD?

In the article, *Duck Soup*, you make the claim that Howard is going to be as "fighting mad and hot-to-trot as the day he fell through the Cosmic Axis!" I hope so. I'm going to hold you to this premise. If Howard continues to be cute, Bill, then you're going to have another Howard that's fighting mad on your hands. (And if you think Acroyear is a mean character, you ain't seen nuthin' yet!)

I'll be watching!

Howard T. Downs
Hallowell, ME

I hope so, Howard, because I didn't take our favorite fowl back to Duckworld just for the joyride — but to show that Howard can be trapped in more than one world he never made. Still think he's cute?

Dear Stan,

Waugh!! Where is Howard the Duck?? Your remake of *Babes in Toyland* was stink-O! I mean, p-e-u-ee! Pinball Lizard and his crew are pale in comparison to that flick's Bogeymen. Greedy Killerwatt can't hold a candle to Barnaby. Nor do Howard and Sunquist the solar-powered Elf come close to being Laurel and Hardy! (P.S.: I think Carol belongs in *Miracle on 34th Street*!)

You guys are out to lunch! You took away the color and gave us black-and-white, reduced the number of times we get to yolk it up, tripled the price, gave us sodomy (in the name of adult comics, of course) and put Howard in pants! I dunno. I dunno.

Paul Boucher
(Address Unknown)

Dear People,

Oh, for the stunning Steve Gerber again! I say *foul* to HTD #3! Horsefeathers! A quacking monstrosity! I am sure Jane Fonda paid you off very handsomely for this one. You claim the basically looney villain, Greedy Killerwatt, was ripping off Christmas? You ripped it off by turning a silly but potentially interesting story into a blatant poke at nuclear energy! Nobody *did* anything in the second part except mouth off cliches. "We don't want your rotten nuclear power!" says the sweet, lovable, innocent symbol of corrupted youth fighting for "the dream." How quaint. How maudlin. How naive.

I wish I could address this letter to a particular person, but the credits on page three listed nothing but Editors, presidents, vice-presidents and staff and such. Who are they? Do they draw the borders? Do they mop the floors? Marvel used to proudly proclaim who did what on the first page of every one of its magazines. Seriously, who drew it? It looked like it was penciled by Gene Colan, but there was no mention of him. Who wrote it? Who inked it? We're genuinely interested, y'know?

Howard the Duck used to be my favorite character. It permitted us to laugh at ourselves through the eyes of the Duck. Howard's one commitment to his readers was never to become an institution. He has become one. He may look and talk the same, but he goes off fighting for truth and justice just like every other Marvel hero now.

Steve never let any serious character say anything like "We will help you destroy this devil plant before it destroys us all!" Saying that, and beginning his previous statement with "It has long been an established fact..." is a little like saying that we should all shoot sharks before they eat us, or blow up cars (which have a yearly death toll total to well over 50,000 as compared to the zero total deaths in nuclear power plants) before they kill us all. Marvel can do much better than this. I know, because I've seen it.

Lastly, what's all this about Howard wearing pants? Why is Marvel suddenly trying to clean up Howard's act, to make him appear more decent? I think he looks pretty silly.

And what happened to the logo? I like the old one better.

Darrell Leland
216 Capri Road
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Marvel had no choice in the de-

cision to dress the duck, Darrell. As I've said before in this column, it was that or face a massive lawsuit by a certain company.

As for the Eskimos assertions which you quote above, they were meant to be viewed absurdly, as tongue in cheek sitcom seriousness, not as polemics. If they didn't come off that way, I apologize. Then there's your 50,000 to 0 ratio comparing the death toll in auto accidents to the death toll in nuclear power plants. I've even seen a poster more or less to that effect by proponents of nuclear power. But people have died and are dying, or are suffering or will suffer in the future from the effects of nuclear power. All your statistic really reveals is that something should be done about auto safety as well as about the dangers of nuclear energy. I don't want my kids to die in a Ford Pinto or a nuclear meltdown.

As for the logo... we're working on it.

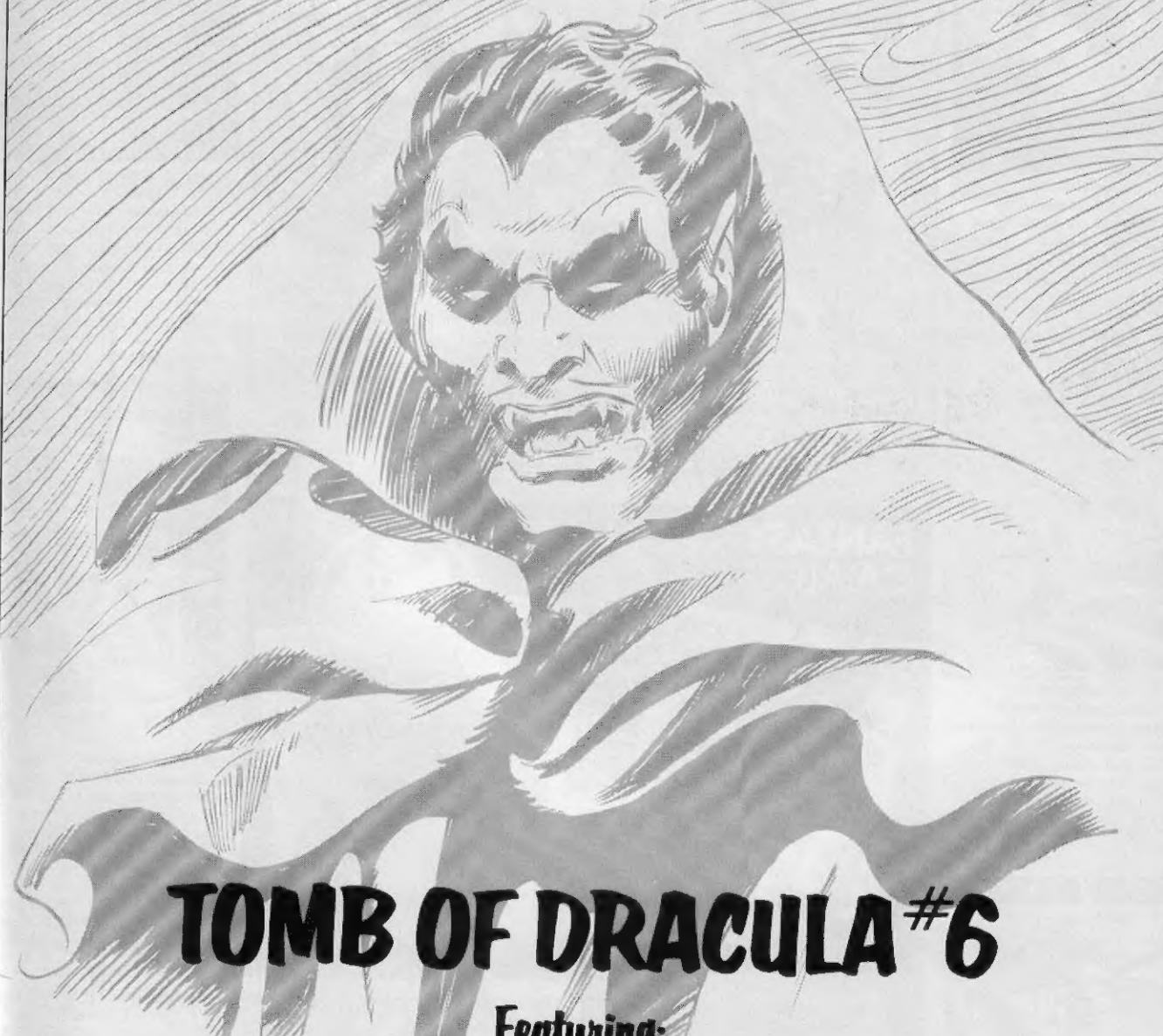
That about wraps it for this ish, duckophiles. You've witnessed history in the making, the reshifting of the Cosmic Axis and Howard's return to a world he thought he'd left behind... and you've seen that the old adage still holds true. You can't go home again!

I'd like to thank Michael Golden for the incredible artistry of this ish (and for last issue's *Drakula* tale). One of the finest new artists in comics today, Michael has lent his talents to one of the most important Duck tales to date. Kudos as well to master inker Bob McLeod.

Next ish Gene Colan returns to illustrate a tale of avarice and affection set in the Florida everglades. It features the macabre *Man-Thing*; an obscure villain who thinks he holds a "monopoly" on people's lives... and more action and absurdity than you'd imagine could be packed into one issue. Plus, we'll have a *Famous Artists Portfolio*, and the beginning of a brand new backup series. Be here for HOWARD THE DUCK #7 — you'll be glad you came!



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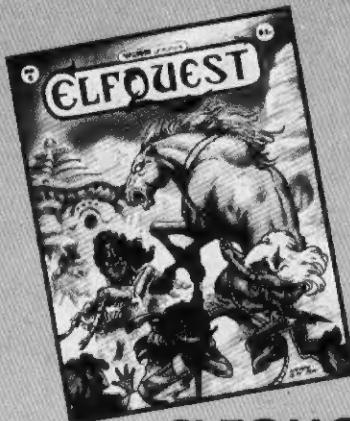
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